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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000230

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 09, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 09, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Photographs of Hakan Acil (27), the police officer, whom the PKK kidnapped two months ago (see press summary 10/11) on the road between Sirnak and Mardin, have been published on a terrorist organization's website. Acil reportedly said, "I thought I would be killed since I am a police officer. However, they told me that I would be released soon. They further said that a non-governmental organization could come and take me...My health condition is good. They treat me the way they treat the others in here." Hurriyet daily drew attention to the weary-looking Acil as he was drinking tea in the photo. Ozgur Gundem, published a second photo of Acil sitting side by side with a PKK member and with a little smile on his face.

HURRIYET / CNNTURK ONLINE / ZAMAN: CHP (Republican People's Party) National Leader Deniz Baykal went to Semdinli and Yuksekova districts of Hakkari. Baykal paid a visit to the Semdinli Mayor Hursit Tekin and paid condolences to the wife of Zahir Korkmaz, the only person who died during the bombing on November 9. Baykal later conducted studies at the area, which was devastated by the November 1 bombing, and at Umut Bookstore, which was bombed on November 9. Baykal later addressed a nearly 1000-person crowd at the main square of the district and said, "This country belongs to all of us. There is no such separation as 'you' and 'us'. It is not possible for anybody to win anything by way of disregarding the presence of each other or not heeding the rights of one another." Baykal further stated in Yuksekova that they came to the region because they wanted to make sure that the incidents be exposed, and not covered. A 150-person group protested Baykal in Hakkari and shouted slogans.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported that the people of Semdinli were not interested at all in the arrival of the main opposition party leader Baykal to their district, especially for his arrival one month later than the incident. One of the local people reportedly said, "If Esat Canan (the Hakkari deputy from CHP) were not in the delegation that accompanied Baykal, people would barely show the smallest hint of recognizing him down here." (Note. A 12/01 press summary reported that CHP did not appoint Esat Canan to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission for the Semdinli Case. Canan had hinted then that not selecting him as a commission member would be an inadequacy on his party's part. End Note.)

HURRIYET / ZAMAN: As the December 14 trial date for Yucel Askin, Van Centennial University Rector, neared, CHP Leader Deniz Baykal paid a visit to Askin, who was arrested on October 14 on charges of financial irregularities and who has been staying at the hospital since November 13 because of a cardiac disorder associated with psychological problems, which surfaced following the suicide of the deputy general secretary of the university. Askin has been under arrest for 56 days. The journalists, who visited Askin, along with the CHP leader, were strictly banned from taking photographs. Commenting on the physical appearance of Askin, the journalists reported that he was weak and has lost a lot of weight. Reportedly, Askin said that he wanted to attend the trial; however, the doctors said he was not quite sure whether his health status would permit that.

ZAMAN: Zaman daily quoted Diyarbakir Soz newspaper's report alleging that Ali Kaya, one of the non-commissioned officers held as defendants in the November 9 bombing in Semdinli, during his tenure in Diyarbakir, reportedly prepared "fake intelligence reports" about nearly 100 businessmen. The daily further claimed that Kaya prepared intelligence reports about Diyarbakir's 4th State Security Court Chairperson and its members for their reported reactionary tendencies and submitted this report to 7th Army Corps Command.

CNNTURK ONLINE: Four security officers died during an attack of the terrorists on a military unit in Sirnak's Guclukonak district on 1 a.m. this morning. Reportedly, the PKK members attacked with rocket propelled grenades, hand grenades and rifles. A confrontation between the security forces and terrorists followed the attack, and two terrorists were killed as a result of that. Upon hearing this news, Minister of Education Huseyin Celik, who is currently in Sirnak's Idil

district to open a school, said, "We came here to open a school and to celebrate this. We feel a deep sorrow now that we heard this unfortunate news. Whatever its source is, we must all condemn terrorism. Nobody benefits from terrorism. We are very sad."

NTVMSNBC ONLINE: There were two bombing attempts in Tokat; in the first incident, a packet was noticed yesterday evening in front of the Subgovernor's Office in Tokat's Turhal district. People, upon noticing the packet, called the bomb squad, which defused the bomb. The bomb was comprised of two TNT blocks; and the specialists said that the humidity of the blocks prevented its detonation. The second bomb attack targeted the Governor's Office in Tokat. A bottled gas canister with a fuse was placed at the back entrance of the Office's building; however, although the fuse ignited, the bottled gas reportedly did not detonate. Governor Erdogan Gurbuz, former Hakkari governor, who was appointed as a governor to Tokat following the Semdinli incidents (see press summary 11/25), said that there was nothing to worry about and the situation was under control.

ZAMAN: Thirteen students were arrested at Erzurum's university on charges that they would hold a pro-PKK meeting to discuss how to organize the youth in the universities. Police, upon receiving a tip-off, conducted a raid on a house and seized documents and books which made PKK propaganda. The students arraigned were released by the court later. Separately, a 21-year-old soldier enrolled at 9th Army Corps Command in Erzurum has been convicted and sentenced to six years and 3 months of imprisonment for being a member of the PKK.

ZAMAN: Two modified blank firing handguns and one blank firing handgun were found in the locker of a 15-year-old student at a Diyarbakir Boarding Primary School located on the road towards Elazig. The police brought the child to the Security Directorate's Children Branch.

ZAMAN: Members of the Turkish Parliament's Human Rights Commission may reportedly resign because of an alleged controversy involving the Chairperson Mehmet Elkatmis. Elkatmis attributed the recent inefficiency of the commission to the shortage of staff made up of specialists.

ZAMAN: Syria's olive oil factories have reportedly discharged waste products into the Asi River and caused significant environmental pollution. Thousands of fish reportedly died on the Turkish part of the river because of the oily layer formed on the water. Provincial Director of Environment and Forests said that they took samples of water and gave it to the Mustafa Kemal University in Hatay for analysis.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported that today marked the first month of the November 9 Semdinli bombing. A big event will reportedly be organized tomorrow and thousands of people from around Turkey, non-governmental organizations, will pour into Semdinli to condemn the bombing incidents and to strengthen the bonds of solidarity.

OZGUR GUNDEM: According to the reported results of "a referendum" held in Turkey's Aegean Region, 30,000 people signed a document that declared acknowledgement of (terrorist leader) Abdullah Ocalan as the political will of the people.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Hulya Avsar, one of the most famous celebrities in Turkey, said that she would do everything she could to contribute to the resolution of the Kurdish issue.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, the people in Mahmur Camp in Iraq told the U.S. delegation that visited the camp that they would not return to Turkey unless Turkey ended its "execution" and "negligence" policies pursued against the Kurds (see press summary 12/08).

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